

show, or attempt to show, that these substances are toxins in the sense in which bacteriologists use the word "toxin." In the case of diphtheria bacilli and the tetanus bacilli, as everybody knows, it is possible to prepare a bacteria-free toxin which when injected into animals produces the characteristic features of the disease in question. Nobody has ever succeeded in making a potent ecto-toxin from tubercle bacilli, and M. Spahlinger has not published any experiments which would support the claim that he has been more successful than other workers. The serums which he calls antitoxins are so called because they are obtained from horses which have been injected with substances which he calls toxins. We do not know of any published work which shows that these serums contained antitoxins, and as there is no evidence that M. Spahlinger has ever prepared an extracellular toxin, in the ordinary sense of the word, from the tubercle bacilli, it is difficult to say how such evidence can be forthcoming. The claim for the antitoxic properties of the serum is based on the fact that cases of rapidly advancing caseous tuberculosis have been arrested by the use of the serum. As to the value of such clinical evidence it is not possible, from the material so far published, to express any opinion. It is common knowledge that many cases of acute caseous tuberculosis do survive the acute stage and reach a chronic stage, when the patients are able to resume a more or less normal life. The cases of pulmonary tuberculosis showing the signs of large dry cavities, which may be seen in any out-patient department, are sufficient evidence of this.

It is, of course, possible that the elaborate and complicated methods which M. Spahlinger employs may possess advantages, but there is no laboratory evidence that they are any better than what has been done before, and the only evidence there is rests on the observations of some clinical observers who have been favourably impressed by the results which they are obtaining.

## THE DANGEROUS DRUGS AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1923.

### STATEMENT BY THE HOME OFFICE.

WE have received from the Home Office the following statement, dated May 28th, 1923:

The Secretary of State desires to draw attention to the provisions of the above Act, which received the Royal assent on the 17th instant and came into force at once. This Act amends and amplifies the Dangerous Drugs Act, 1920, and amends Section 17 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868; but it should be noted that it does not vary the drugs to which the Dangerous Drugs Act, 1920, applies, and does not in any way alter the Raw Opium Regulations or the Dangerous Drugs Regulations which are now in force. The effect of its provisions may be summarized as follows:

*Section 1* gives increased powers of search. It empowers a Justice of the Peace to grant a warrant to search any premises and any persons found on the premises, in any case where he is satisfied that there is reasonable ground for suspecting that drugs are being kept illicitly, or that a transaction in drugs which will be contrary to the Dangerous Drugs Acts or the "corresponding law" in a foreign country ("corresponding law" is defined in Section 6) is being carried out or is in contemplation and that documents relating to the transaction are to be found on the premises; and the constable who makes the search may, on reasonable suspicion of any offence, seize any drugs found or any documents relating to a transaction of the character referred to. It also makes it clear that the existing powers of inspection in Section 10 of the Act of 1920 cover documents as well as books.

*Section 2*, Subsection (1), substitutes two new subsections (1) and (2) of Section 13 of the Act of 1920. The first re-enacts the existing Subsection (1), with the addition of two new offences, viz. (1) the making or using of false statements with a view to obtaining a licence or other authority under the Act, and (2) the aiding, abetting, procuring, etc., of the commission outside Great Britain of any offence against the "corresponding law" (see Section 6) of that country, or the doing of any act preparatory to or in furtherance of any act which if committed here would be an offence against the Dangerous Drugs Act. Under the second of these provisions, it should now be possible to deal effectively with persons in this country who organize the smuggling of drugs from the Continent to the Far

East, the United States of America, and other countries, but do not themselves handle any of the drugs in this country. It will be noted that the powers of search given by Section 1 extend to such cases.

New Subsection (2) increases the penalties under the old Act. It enables proceedings to be taken on indictment by or with the consent of the Attorney-General or by the Director of Public Prosecutions, in which case the penalty may be as much as a fine of £1,000 or 10 years' penal servitude, or both, and substitutes for the graduated penalties fixed by the Act of 1920 for first and subsequent offences on summary conviction a uniform maximum penalty of £250 or 12 months' imprisonment, or both. An exception is made for offences committed through inadvertence in connexion with the keeping of records or the giving or dispensing of prescriptions if not connected with any offence or intended offence against the Acts. In these cases the maximum penalty is a fine of £50. Persons attempting to commit, or soliciting or inciting another person to commit, an offence are made liable to the same penalties; and directors and officers of companies are made personally liable for offences committed by their companies, unless they can prove that the offence was committed without their knowledge or consent.

Subsection (3) of Section 2 makes clear two points about which doubt had been felt: (a) that in a prosecution under the Act it rests with the defendant to prove that he had a licence or other authority to do what he is charged with doing, and that the onus is not on the prosecutor to prove that he had no licence or authority; (b) that a term of imprisonment for non-payment of a fine imposed in addition to a penalty of imprisonment may be ordered to commence *after* the expiration of the sentence of imprisonment. Sections 3 and 4 are amendments of Section 17 of the Pharmacy Acts.

*Section 3* relates to the sale of poisons to registered medical practitioners, registered dentists, and registered veterinary surgeons. Under that Section purchasers of poisons included in Part I of the Schedule of the Poisons and Pharmacy Act, 1908, are required to sign the poison book. This provision had been very much neglected in the case of sales to doctors, and after consultation with the British Medical Association and the Pharmaceutical Society an alternative procedure has been laid down in the Section. This procedure is as follows:

(a) The doctor, etc., must furnish a signed order, bearing his name and address, and stating the nature and amount of the poison required.

(b) The chemist must be reasonably satisfied that the signature is genuine, and is that of a duly qualified doctor, etc.

(c) The poison, if sent by post, must be sent by registered post.

(d) The chemist must himself make an entry in the poison book, and must keep the original signed order for at least two years.

Special provision is also made for the supply of a poison to a doctor in an emergency.

This procedure will apply to sales to registered doctors, dentists, or veterinary surgeons of the dangerous drugs; and either this or the signature of the poisons book should be required to be observed. It should be noted that the provisions of Section 17 of the Act of 1868, and of Section 3 of this Act, apply equally to sales by wholesale dealers to doctors, dentists, and veterinary surgeons.

*Section 4*, Subsection (1), dispenses with the entry by a chemist in his prescription book of the particulars of medicines containing poisons dispensed by him as medical prescriptions issued under the National Health Insurance Acts, as these prescriptions are preserved by the Insurance Authorities, and are available for examination if required by the authorities. Subsection (2) strengthens the provisions of the law with regard to the labelling of poisons. The label must in future state the name of the poison (not merely, as previously, the name of the article, which might give no indication of the nature of the poison it contained), and, where the poison is only one of the ingredients, the proportion it bears to the other ingredients. An Order-in-Council will be issued describing the particulars to be given as to the proportion.

*Section 5* gives statutory sanction to the existing practice in calculating the percentage of a solid ingredient in a liquid preparation. It is the method used in the *British Pharmacopoeia*.

DR. KLEIWEG DE ZWAAR, professor at the University of Amsterdam, has instituted a triennial prize of the value of 2,500 francs, which will be awarded for the first time in 1924 for the best work in physical or prehistoric anthropology during the preceding three years. Candidates should apply before November 1st, 1923, to the Secretary, École d'Anthropologie, 15, Rue de l'École de Médecine, Paris.